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AUTHOR Watley, Donivan J.
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ABSTRACT

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Donivan J. Watley

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NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP CORPORATION

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The National Merit Scholarship Corporation was founded in 1955 for the purpose of annually identifying and honoring the nation's most talented youth. Merit Scholarships, which are awarded on a competitive basis, provide financial assistance that Scholars use to attend the colleges of their choice.

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ABSTRACT

Men who received Merit Scholarships in 1956 and 1957 were followed up in 1965 to determine their educational and career progress. Information was available for 984 of the 1,005 living male Scholars who won Merit awards during that period. Emphasis was placed on Scholars who entered five fairly delineated but broad career fields: engineering, medicine, law, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. Clear differences were found among the Scholars in these groups on a variety of variables: family background characteristics, measured scholastic ability, academic aspirations and achievements, activities and marital status, political views, and personal goals.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC "BRAINS"
IN DIFFERENT CAREER FIELDS

Donivan J. Watley

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation--originated in 1955 for the purpose of annually identifying and honoring the nation's brightest academic achievers--provides an excellent opportunity for the longitudinal study of academic "brains" (e.g., Nichols and Davis, 1964; Nichols and Astin, 1966; Watley, 1968 and 1969; Watley and Kaplan, 1970 a and b). The first step in the Merit competition involves completion of the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT). The students who score highest in each state are selected as Semifinalists. The number of Semifinalists named in each state or selection unit is less than 1% of the graduating high school seniors in that state or unit. The Semifinalists who are endorsed by their schools and whose high scores are verified by a second test--the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) of the College Entrance Examination Board--become Finalists. A selection committee and scholarship sponsors use high school records, recommendations, and test scores to select the Merit Scholars.

Merit Scholars have unusual potential for academic and career achievements. A particularly relevant characteristic is that they seem to provide their own spark. Nichols (1967, p. 494) concluded from a followup study of Scholars' educational progress that they appear more like cannon balls than like tender plants:

"They maintain their momentum with great inertia, they tend to knock over obstacles in their way, and they are not easily deflected from their path. They will not wither and die if they are neglected, and they do not need a hothouse environment in which to develop."

The career decisions of high ability students determine in part the distribution of talent among the various occupational fields. Thus it is important to study career decision trends and to attempt to learn the characteristics of students who choose one field rather than another. Several prior studies (e.g., Nichols, 1964; Watley and Nichols, 1969; Watley and Kaplan, 1971) have reported the pre- and post-college career plans of these bright achievers and one point is clear: precollege selections are often not a good indicator of what students wind up doing. This study is a descriptive one which focuses on the characteristics of "brains" who actually entered or were about to enter various career fields.

Male Merit Scholarship winners in 1956 and 1957--the first two years that Scholars were selected--were investigated in this study. They were followed up in 1965 to determine their educational and career progress. Thus eight to nine years had elapsed when this followup was conducted, depending on the year they entered college. The characteristics of Scholars were studied in terms of career decisions to enter

five fairly delineated but broad career fields. The career fields used were selected because they were the ones most frequently chosen by these Scholars. Women Scholars were not included because of the difficulty in establishing clearcut career groupings of sufficient size to provide meaningful results.

METHOD

A total of 1,014 boys received Merit Scholarships during the first two years of the Merit Program--403 in 1956 and 611 in 1957. Nine were deceased by 1965 but the remaining 1,005 were mailed questionnaires during that summer requesting information about their educational and career progress. Usable information was returned by 822. However, since the Scholars were also asked to complete a similar questionnaire in 1964, the career decisions of 162 additional Scholars were obtained from the earlier questionnaire. Altogether, information about career choices was available for 984 Scholars. About 99% of the Scholars completed the 1964 questionnaire. This high response was due to persistent mailed reminders and to a telephone interview with the remaining nonresponders.

Each Scholar was placed into one of five rather broad career fields: engineering, medicine, law, the social sciences (including education and the humanities), and the physical sciences (e.g., physics, mathematics, chemistry, geology). Those who did not fit these categories were placed in a group labeled "other."

The data used in this study were collected from several sources. Most of the information used was obtained on the 1964 and 1965 followup questionnaires. Each source is briefly described as follows:

The Finalist Information Form contains several kinds of data collected as part of the Scholar selection process: SAT-Verbal and SAT-Mathematics scores, high school percentile rank (HSR), high school activities, parents' income, amount of initial stipend, precollege major and career plans.

The 1956 Scholar Questionnaire was administered only to 1956 Scholars. It included considerable information in these areas: parents' education and occupation, family finances, home facilities, and vocational planning.

The Survey of Talented High School Graduates was completed only by the 1957 Scholars and contained much of the same information included on the 1956 Scholar Questionnaire.

The 1961 Scholar Followup obtained information about the 1957 Scholars four years after they entered college. This questionnaire stressed the Scholar's educational progress, his career plans, the factors that he believed had influenced his plans. His personal aspirations were examined, as were his self-ratings on a number of personality characteristics.

The 1964 Followup obtained information for both the 1956 and 1957 Scholars. Several kinds of data were collected: academic and vocational achievement, educational and career plans, activities and interests, and religious views.

The 1965 Followup was given to both 1956 and 1957 Scholars; the information obtained pertained largely to educational and career progress.

RESULTS

Career Decisions

The career fields that the 1956 and 1957 Scholars entered or were about to enter by 1965 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Percentages of 1956-57 Male Scholars
Entering Various Career Fields

Year	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineer- ing	Medicine	Law	Other Fields	N
1956	27	18	11	10	9	25	395
1957	25	20	10	7	8	30	589
Total	26	20	10	8	8	28	984

Based on precollege choices, the engineering field suffered a substantial loss of talent to the other fields (Watley, 1968). Although 28% stated engineering as their precollege objective, only 10% listed that field as their choice in 1965. The physical sciences also showed a net loss of talent--34% precollege to 26% who actually entered--but this loss was not nearly as severe as that incurred by engineering. While medicine and law registered slight net gains in terms of precollege to final decisions, the social sciences-humanities registered marked gains.

About 12% of the Scholars answered "yes" or "maybe" to the question: "Would you chose a different field from the one you now see yourself pursuing?" Only 4% of the engineers said "yes" or "maybe," as did 17% of those in law, 13% in the physical sciences, 10% in the social sciences, and 8% in medicine.

About two-thirds of the Scholars indicated that they could not pinpoint exactly when in their academic careers that a definite decision was made to enter the field finally selected. While 90% of the engineers reported that they did not know, over half of those in the social sciences said that they did. Of those who knew, most said that the decision was made during the junior year or in graduate school.

Overall, about a fifth of the Scholars reported having received vocational counseling. Only 7% of those in medicine and 10% of those in the physical sciences were counseled, but almost a third of the Scholars in "other" fields and about a quarter of those in the social sciences received vocational assistance.

Family Background

Information pertaining to the family background characteristics of these male Scholars is presented in Table 2. The fathers of those pursuing medical careers were particularly well educated in terms of years of formal education, and about a third

of them worked in the professions. The fathers of lawyers were less inclined than some other fields (e.g., physical sciences or medicine) to be employed in the professions, but they were more inclined than some (e.g., engineering or the social sciences) to own businesses. As might be expected, the fathers of Scholars in law and medicine more often earned big incomes. Hometowns of 15,000 or less were just as likely to produce Scholars in any of the various fields except medicine. The homes of Scholar engineers were much more likely to have fewer than 100 books.

Table 2
Family Background Characteristics of 1956-57 Male Scholars

Background Characteristics	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineering	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Father's Education:						
% completed HS or less	26	35	30	14	24	32
% bachelor's or higher degree	52	49	45	63	50	48
Mother's Education:						
% completed HS or less	30	35	39	32	37	36
% bachelor's or higher degree	43	41	30	42	29	37
Father's Occupation:*						
% in professional occupations	35	31	27	32	21	29
% in own business	27	22	16	27	36	30
Family Income:**						
% earning less than \$5,000	27	20	30	8	15	20
% earning \$10,000 or more	23	24	20	47	39	23
Size of Hometown:**						
% 15,000 or less	32	32	30	17	30	29
% 200,000 or more	24	37	35	42	27	33
Number of Books in Home:						
% with less than 100	12	10	28	7	9	12

* Information available for 1957 Scholars only.

** Information available for 1956 Scholars only.

Scholastic Ability

No differences were observed among Scholars in the various career fields on high school percentile rank, the average for each field being about .98.

Although the Scholar selection process insures a homogeneous group of high ability students, it is nevertheless conceivable that the Scholars in different career fields vary on tested academic ability. Table 3 reveals that the average SAT-Verbal scores, while generally lower than the SAT-Mathematics scores, are quite similar for Scholars in medicine, law, and the physical and social sciences. But the mean score for the engineers was lower and differed significantly ($p < .05$) from the average score for each of the fields just named. While similar to the engineers'

average score, the mean for Scholars in the "other fields" was significantly lower than the means for medicine, law, and the social sciences.

Table 3
SAT Mean Scores for 1956-57 Male Scholars
in the Various Career Fields

		Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineer- ing	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
SAT-V	Mn	693.7	699.4	682.9	699.7	701.6	687.4
	SD	41.4	37.7	43.4	44.0	34.2	42.7
SAT-M	Mn	748.1	720.4	740.1	728.4	724.5	726.0
	SD	47.0	64.5	47.2	62.0	58.7	60.9

On the SAT-Mathematics section, the physical scientists scored significantly higher on the average than the Scholars in each field except engineering. The engineers' mean score was significantly higher than the averages for all fields except the physical sciences and medicine.

Academic Aspirations and Achievements

The physical scientists obtained slightly higher undergraduate grade averages than the Scholars in other fields. The grade averages, based on a four-point scale, were: physical science 3.42, social science 3.36, medicine 3.34, law 3.19, engineering 3.13, and other fields 3.14. The obtained F-ratio of 10.32 was highly significant ($p < .01$ level).

Table 4 lists the highest degrees earned by Scholars in the various fields by 1965, eight to nine years after entering college, and shows the percentages planning to obtain different degrees. While a high percentage of the physicians and lawyers had already reached their degree objectives by 1965, substantial percentages in the other fields had not. However, MD and LLB degrees typically are completed in less time than a PhD.

In 1964 the Scholars were asked to indicate the types of achievement or special recognition they had received in these areas: scientific; artistic; musical or literary; business or professional; community or public service; and "other" (i.e., an achievement not included in one of the other areas). Except for the "other" category, these men reported more achievement or recognition in science than in any of the other areas. Scholars in the physical sciences and medicine led the way in achievements of this kind, almost a third in each field having received this type of honor; 22% of the engineers reported scientific achievements, while only 4% of those in law had honors of this kind. One-quarter to one-third of the Scholars in each career field except law (14%) reported having received some honor in "other" achievement areas. Few honors were reported in the artistic, musical, literary, or business-professional areas, but it is well to consider that the great majority of these Scholars

Table 4

Highest Degree Held and Degree Aspirations of 1956-57 Male Scholars
Entering Various Career Fields, Reported in Percentages

	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineer- ing	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Highest Degree Held:						
Less than BA	1	2	2	--	2	8
Bachelor's	30	29	40	19	20	49
Master's	42	54	41	7	5	29
PhD	27	12	16	1	1	4
LLB	--	--	--	--	68	4
MD	--	--	--	72	--	--
Other	--	2	1	1	4	6
Total N	207	161	90	74	60	217
Highest Degree Planned:						
Less than BA	--	--	--	--	--	2
Bachelor's	2	--	1	--	--	21
Master's	6	11	37	--	3	31
PhD	92	87	60	4	2	31
LLB	--	--	--	--	88	6
MD	--	--	--	94	--	1
Other	--	2	2	2	7	8
Total N	199	157	84	73	58	211

were either still in school or had only recently completed their formal schooling when this survey was taken.

Activities and Marital Status

Table 5 suggests that the men composing these career groups differed somewhat regarding their marriage and dating patterns. In part marriage appeared to be a function of one's earning status. Table 6 shows that 61% of those in engineering reported employment in this field as their major activity during 1964-65, far more than the Scholars in any other career group. Table 5 indicates that 71% of the engineers were married. Scholars in medicine were also frequently married (72%), and Table 4 shows that 72% of them had completed their MD's by the summer of 1965. However, other factors besides employment were involved since Table 5 points out that, of the unmarried Scholars, 11% of those in the physical sciences and 10% of those in the social sciences did not even date.

In 1965, when the great majority of the 1956-57 Scholars were 26-27 years of age, the average age-at-marriage of the married men was 23. The average age-at-marriage of Scholars in medicine was 23.6, which is significantly higher ($p < .05$) than the marital age for those in the physical sciences, engineering, or "other" groups. On the average, married male Scholars in each of the career fields had about 1.6 children.

Clear trends were found for the amount of education completed by the spouses of

Table 5

Marital Status of 1956-57 Male Scholars Entering Various Career Fields, Reported in Percentages

Marital Status	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineering	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Single, does not date	11	10	2	3	2	12
Single, goes on dates	29	35	26	24	34	30
Married	59	55	72	72	64	57
Divorced	1	--	--	1	--	1
Total N	206	158	90	72	59	217

Table 6

Percentages of 1956-57 Scholars in the Various Career Fields Who Were Engaged in These Major Activities During 1964-65

Major Activity	Physical Science	Social Sciences	Engineering	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Working in career field	32	29	61	34	47	42
Attending graduate school	63	53	31	59	36	30
Working, not in career field	5	13	6	4	12	23
Other	--	5	2	3	5	5

the married Scholars (Table 7). For example, wives of Scholars in engineering clearly had less formal academic education than those of Scholars in the four other career fields.

Political Positions

Table 8 shows that the Scholars in these various fields had somewhat different political positions and political attitudes. For example, 58% of the engineers indicated that they were Republicans and 60% expressed conservative or moderate attitudes, while 49% of the social science Scholars were Democrats and about half had liberal attitudes. Other trends may be seen in this table.

Table 7

Percentages of Spouses of 1956-57 Male Scholars Entering Various Career Fields who had Different Levels of Educational Attainment

Spouses' Education	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineering	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Less than a Bachelor's	29	21	42	22	16	28
Bachelor's degree	31	28	34	25	39	41
Some graduate work	22	24	20	31	29	22
Master's or Doctoral level degree	18	27	4	22	16	9
N	122	85	65	51	38	123

Table 8

Percentages of 1956-57 Scholars in the Various Career Fields
Holding these Political Positions and Attitudes

	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineer- ing	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Political Position						
Republican	36	23	58	39	29	41
Democrat	43	49	22	31	53	30
Independent	14	18	18	25	12	20
Other	7	10	2	5	6	9
Political Attitude						
Conservative	10	7	24	14	11	15
Moderate	26	18	36	36	36	27
Liberal	43	48	20	20	35	30
Other	21	27	20	30	18	28
N	243	181	90	80	73	259

Importance of Goals

The 1957 Scholars were surveyed in 1961 regarding their rating of various personal life goals. The percentages of males in the different career fields who rated these goals very important or essential are shown in Table 9.

Those in the physical sciences were not as apt to give high ratings to goals

Table 9

Percentages of 1957 Male Scholars in the Various Career Fields
who Rated these Personal Goals Very Important or Essential

Personal Goals	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Engineer- ing	Medicine	Law	Other Fields
Making inventions	11	3	23	6	3	9
Becoming an authority	72	63	70	53	79	50
Help others	36	46	53	73	79	59
Good parent	69	81	89	82	82	80
Civic leader	18	18	33	35	67	39
Being well-liked	28	33	56	50	54	46
Financial security	41	40	73	50	67	54
Involved in public affairs	13	18	10	9	70	27
Happy and content	52	66	69	71	82	66
Find real purpose in life	74	80	88	88	82	83
Human welfare	50	66	54	91	88	60
Awards and recognition	21	21	15	21	36	15
Become famous	10	6	6	6	21	13
Personal maturity	77	79	85	85	91	86
Follow religious code	23	12	30	21	30	26

involving social or interpersonal interaction (e.g., helping others, being a good parent, being a civic leader, being well-liked) as were the Scholars in other career fields. Those in law appeared quite motivated toward civic and community interaction; those in both law and medicine gave high ratings to the importance of human welfare.

THUMBNAIL GROUP DESCRIPTIONS

The purpose of this study is to provide some descriptive characteristics of male Merit Scholars who entered various career fields. Brief descriptions are given below of those who chose the physical sciences, the social sciences, engineering, medicine, or law.

Physical Sciences

The physical sciences, especially physics and mathematics, were the precollege career choices of more male Scholars--about a third--than any other field. The trend in career field turnover is typically away from the hard sciences to programs that have less demanding prerequisites. However, since 26% of the Scholars indicated eight to nine years later that their "final" choice was in the physical sciences, this broad field did quite well in keeping a big proportion of these highly able students. In contrast, engineering did not.

Physical scientists came from families where both parents typically had considerable schooling; 43% of their mothers had at least a bachelor's which is considerably higher than the percentages for mothers of Scholars in engineering and law. Although 62% of their fathers either worked in the professions or owned businesses--a higher combined total than any other field, their incomes were particularly well-spread in contrast to the incomes of Scholars' fathers in some of the other fields. About a quarter reported annual earnings (in the mid-50's) of less than \$5,000, while about a quarter earned \$10,000 or more. Only 3% reported incomes of \$20,000 or more which is a smaller proportion than the 10-15% of most other fields. They more frequently lived in moderately sized cities of 15,000-200,000 than the families of social scientists. Scholars who entered medicine much more frequently came from cities of 200,000 or larger than did the physical scientists.

The physical scientists did about as well as Scholars in other fields on the SAT-Verbal, but they did very well indeed on the mathematics section of the SAT. Moreover, as a group they did extremely well in their undergraduate academic work: virtually all completed their bachelor's degrees and they maintained slightly higher grade averages than the Scholars in any other career field. They also had high academic aspirations, all but 8% planning to obtain a PhD. Since only 27% of them had their doctorates when this survey was made in 1965, a high percentage--almost two-thirds--were still in graduate school. About a third reported having already received some honor or recognition in science.

Fewer of the physical scientists were married than was the case for Scholars in

some other fields (e.g., engineering and medicine). Possibly this is due partly to the fact that more Scholars in the physical sciences were still pursuing their doctorates, but it is also relevant that 11% of them reported doing no dating. Almost two-thirds of the spouses of the married physical scientists held at least a bachelor's degree, but these women still had completed less education on the average than the wives of Scholars in medicine or the social sciences.

Based on ratings of personal goals, physical science "brains" are not as people oriented as the Scholars who entered any of the various other career fields. A much smaller percentage of them considered such goals as "helping others," "human welfare," or "being well-liked" to be highly important.

Social Sciences

The social sciences were not popular among these academic "brains" as precollege choices, only about 9% choosing them. But after the turnover that occurred during college about 20% were in this broad career field. A substantial number of Scholars who initially selected the physical sciences or engineering transferred into the social sciences during their college years (Watley, 1968). More Scholars in this field than in any other area were able to pinpoint when a definite career decision was made. Many pointed to the junior year of college as the period in which a final decision was reached. About a quarter said they received vocational counseling, which is a much higher percentage than that found for most of the other fields.

The families of many Scholars in this broad field were highly educated but many were not--about 35% of the parents of each sex finished only a high school education or less. Still, almost half of their fathers had at least a bachelor's degree, which is similar to the amount of education completed by the fathers of Scholars in the other fields except medicine. Over half of their fathers either worked in the professions or owned businesses, and they were more likely than the families of some Scholars (e.g., physical scientists) to be located in cities of 200,000 or larger. Their fathers typically did not earn nearly as much as the families producing physicians or lawyers.

Social science Scholars obtained a mean SAT-Verbal score that was about the same as those for medicine, law, and the physical sciences, and it was significantly higher than the mean score for engineers. But the engineers and the physical scientists had higher SAT-Mathematics mean scores.

Although 87% of the social scientists expressed PhD aspirations, only 12% had doctorates at the time of this survey. Thus 75% had not yet attained this objective. Interestingly, only about half reported that their major activity was attending graduate school. Quite a few (13%) were holding jobs outside their career field. A smaller percentage of the social scientists were married than was the case for

"brains" in some of the fields (e.g., engineering or medicine). This may be due partly to the fact that a high percentage had not completed their doctorates. But over a fifth of the unmarried Scholars in this field said that they did not date. Spouses of the married "brains" were typically well-educated, about half having had some graduate work and many possessing graduate degrees. Substantially more of them (27%) had graduate degrees than the wives of Scholars in engineering (4%) or "other" fields (9%).

About half said they were Democrats and almost half indicated that they were liberal in their political attitude. However, they did not show much interest in civic leadership or involvement in public affairs.

Engineering

This field was an extremely popular precollege choice of Scholars (28%), second only to the physical sciences. But large numbers transferred into a variety of different fields. The single biggest gainer of engineering transfers was business. Of those who remained in engineering, however, only a handful said "yes" or "maybe" when asked whether they would choose a different field if they could. About 90% of those selecting engineering indicated that they could not pinpoint the period in their lives when a definite decision was made to enter that field.

Only 43% of the fathers of Scholar engineers owned businesses or worked in the professions, considerably below that found for some of the other fields (e.g., the physical sciences or medicine). The fathers of lawyers much more frequently owned businesses than did the engineers' fathers. Engineers' fathers also earned lower incomes than the fathers of Scholars in all other fields except the physical sciences. The parents of engineers were not as well educated as the parents of some other Scholars, and a much higher percentage of their homes had fewer than 100 books. These results, together with the fact that approximately 30% fewer Scholar engineers sought doctorates than did the Scholars in most other fields, suggest that the practical application of knowledge was more often stressed in engineers' homes than on learning for the sake of attaining intellectual excellence. Engineering Scholars obtained significantly lower SAT-Verbal scores on the average than those in law, medicine, or the physical or social sciences, although their mean SAT-Mathematics score was higher than the averages for all fields except the physical sciences and medicine. Academically, their grades were not as high on the average as those of Scholars in some of the other fields.

Engineers were more likely to be employed in their career field at the time of this survey than the Scholars in the various other fields. Still, 44% of the PhD hopefuls had not completed their degree programs by 1965. A relatively high percentage (72%) of the engineers were married, which may be related to the fact that, altogether, 67% were employed. Their wives typically had much less formal education than

the spouses of Scholars in the other fields, which seems to add support to the earlier suggestion that engineers more often than some other Scholars perceive an education as something that is of practical value.

Almost 60% of the engineers said they were Republicans--a higher percentage than any other field investigated--and 60% expressed conservative to moderate political attitudes. A relatively high percentage of them were very concerned about financial security, but few of them expressed much interest in public affairs.

Medicine

In contrast to the other fields, medicine kept a relatively high percentage (60%) of its precollege recruits. About 7% of all Scholars indicated medicine as their precollege choice and a slight net gain, 8%, actually entered this field. Relatively few (7%) in medicine reported that they received vocational counseling assistance in reaching a career decision, and only 8% said that they might consider entering a different field.

Scholars in medicine had a number of distinguishing characteristics: their fathers typically were college graduates and a high percentage either owned businesses or worked in the professions; their fathers had large incomes, more than in any other field; and their families more frequently lived in cities of at least 200,000 than the families of Scholars who chose most of the other fields. Over 40% of their mothers had at least a bachelor's degree.

The SAT-Verbal mean score for the Scholars in medicine was similar to the means for Scholars in the physical and social sciences and in law, but was higher than the means for those in engineering and "other" fields. Only the physical scientists obtained a significantly higher SAT-Mathematics mean.

Virtually all of those in medicine sought a doctoral level degree, and almost three-quarters had reached that goal by 1965. Altogether, 93% reported that their major activity during the 1964-65 academic year was either working in their career field or attending medical school. While a relatively high percentage (72%) were married, their age-at-marriage was significantly higher than the marital age for Scholars in the physical sciences, engineering, or "other" fields. Scholars in medicine typically were married at a time not too distant from completing their doctoral studies. The spouses of these Scholars were well-educated, over 50% holding at least a bachelor's degree at the time of this survey.

Substantial representations of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents were observed among the Scholars in medicine, but few (14%) said they had conservative political attitudes. In rating the importance of personal goals, they typically placed high importance on human welfare and social service, although this did not entail becoming involved in civic affairs.

Law

Five percent of the Scholars stated law as their precollege objective, but 8% indicated eight to nine years later that they had entered or were about to enter the law field. Fifty-five percent of those who selected law as their initial choice actually entered this field. However, some of them apparently were unhappy with their choice since 17% said in 1965 that they might choose a different field if they could make the decision again.

The fathers of Scholars in law had about as much formal education, relatively speaking, as the fathers of Scholars in the various other fields, and except for the engineers, a similar percentage of them (57%) worked in the professions or owned businesses. They did quite well financially, relatively more of them earning \$10,000 or more than the fathers of Scholars in any field except medicine.

The lawyers had a significantly higher SAT-Verbal mean than those in engineering and "other" fields, but Scholars in engineering and the physical sciences had higher SAT-Mathematics means. While they made good academic progress, their grades were not as high on the average as those of Scholars in some other fields, particularly the physical scientists. About two-thirds of those in law had completed an LLB by 1965, and approximately that same percentage were married.

Substantially more of them had obtained the highest degree they expected to get than was the case for the various other fields except medicine. More of their wives had at least a bachelor's degree than the wives of engineers or physical scientists. Like the married Scholars in the various fields, they averaged 1.6 children per family.

The Democratic affiliation was easily the most popular political position among the lawyers, and 71% indicated that they were moderates or liberals. In terms of personal goals, they appeared far more concerned than the Scholars in other fields about their involvement in public affairs and civic leadership; 79% placed a high value on helping others. They also seemed to stress the importance of financial security. Almost 80% wanted to become an authority, and relatively more of them wanted personal fame.

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